

HOUSE BILL 2939

By Windle

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,
relative to the creation of a rural poverty center at
Tennessee Technological University.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 8, is amended by adding
the following as a new, appropriately designated part:

§ 49-8-____. There is hereby established, within Tennessee Technological
University's college of education, a rural poverty center, whose purposes are to:

- (1) Research and formulate models to increase job opportunities and per
capita income in rural Tennessee to reach parity with the nation;
- (2) Research and develop programs to strengthen the capacity of the
citizens of rural Tennessee to compete in the global economy;
- (3) Develop strategies for the improvement of infrastructure for
Tennessee's rural counties to make them economically competitive;
- (4) Develop strategies for the improvement of Tennessee's highway
system to reduce rural Tennessee's isolation;
- (5) Provide a focused agenda to expand the understanding of the causes,
consequences and effects of poverty in local geographic areas or specific
substantive areas of this state; and
- (6) Create a research opportunity for scholars and institutions otherwise
unlikely to participate extensively in health and human services related programs
to support this state's poverty research effort.

§ 49-8-____. Pursuant to its duties established herein, the Center shall also examine the following socio-economic trends in rural Tennessee, in addition to any other topics deemed relevant:

- (1) Poverty rates;
- (2) Per capita income;
- (3) Employment trends, including unemployment and underemployment;
- (4) Educational trends, including high school graduation rates;
- (5) Population trends; and
- (6) Challenges to reducing economic distress, including, but not limited to:
 - (A) Competition from imports in key industries;
 - (B) Declining real wages; and
 - (C) Economic decline of local industry.

§ 49-8-____. On or before December 31 of each year, Tennessee Technological University, in conjunction with the rural poverty center, shall submit a report to the governor and to each member of the general assembly which documents the implementation, activities and accomplishments of the program, and shall include findings and recommendation pertaining to poverty in rural Tennessee.

SECTION 2. The board of regents, in conjunction with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations to effectuate the purposes of this act, including, but not limited to, submitting applications for federal funding with the United States department of health and human services. All such rules and regulations shall be promulgated in accordance with the provisions of Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4, Chapter 5.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2008, the public welfare requiring it.